

## MEAT PRODUCTION IN THE WEST

Will Probably Be Increase In  
Output and Also in Cost

Settlement of Public Lands, Thus Re-  
ducing the Range, Responsible for  
Former Decrease—Range Can

That heretofore there should be a slow increase in the output of beef and mutton in the range states of the West, but that this increase is likely to be accompanied by an increase in the cost of production, are the chief conclusions of a report on "Live Stock Production in the Eleven Far Western Range States" which the department of agriculture has just issued. This report is one of the five sections of a comprehensive report on the meat situation in the United States, in the preparation of which the department specialists have been engaged for some time. It discusses the reasons for the long decline in meat production in the west and explains why there is reason to believe that this is now a thing of the past. In addition it includes detailed studies of the present cost of producing steers and lambs.

between 1900 and 1914, the year in which the investigations on which the report is based were made, the numbers of live stock in the eleven States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, declined about 13 per cent. For this decline the report holds the settlement of public lands and the consequent reduction of the range primarily responsible. A number of other causes have contributed to the downward movement.

but it is pointed out that these have been more than offset by high prices and therefore more profitable range animals, and the general agricultural development which have favored production by lead.

The prediction that this decrease hereafter will give way to an increase is based upon the belief that the amount of live stock on farms and homesteads will be greater in the future, that the stock ranges in the national forests will continue to improve, that the carrying capacity of the stock ranges on the public domain may be increased by legal regulation, and finally that high prices of range animals and better methods will result in a more efficient utilization of the available forage, or, in other words, a greater production per unit of forage.

In 1914 it was estimated that no more than 50 per cent of the new settlers had more live stock than was necessary to

Only the best work and much animal. The situation in respect however, was changing even the movement for the production of more live stock may be expected to continue because both market and agricultural conditions make this indispensable to really successful farming. The chance will be gradual, it is said, and only a head of stock will be added to a farm. But the increase will be greater than that which is likely to be accomplished in any other way. The problem for the States and the national government, it is said, is to aid in the change by working out a system which will make such agriculture profitable.

In addition to this increase in the number of farms there is little doubt that the carrying capacity of the existing ranges can be greatly enlarged. This has been demonstrated in the na-

lional forests where improved methods and regulation have increased the capacity of many ranges from 15 to 30 per cent. This process should continue for at least ten years more and should result in building up the carrying capa-

If similar control could be exercised over the public domain outside of the forests it is estimated that the percentage of the national forest as a whole by perhaps 15 per cent.

of these ranges could be increased about 20 per cent. About half of this would

result from the improvement in the range itself after overstocking and premature grazing were prevented and natural reseeding facilitated. The remain-

der would follow water development, the construction of fences and the introduction of methods of handling stock which are out of the question as long as the improvement of conditions on the range merely provides an incentive for new men to crowd in and undo by overstocking whatever good has been accomplished. The carrying capacity of these

Other factors, though of less importance, that should tend to increase the future production of live stock are greater economy in the use of forage both on the range and on the farm.

both on the range and on the farm, the use of more and higher grade bulls and better management of the breeding animals through the year. The last two, it is said, offer the possibility of increasing the calf crop five or ten percent and the average weight of a two-year-old steer perhaps thirty pounds. Where winter feeding is practiced it

believed that a yearling steer will cost approximately \$30 and a "long" two-year-old \$45. In the range sections of the Southwest, on the other hand, the costs may be estimated at from \$15 to \$19 for a yearling and from \$20 to \$25 for a two-year-old. With sheep there is a similar variation. In California the cost of producing a lamb is placed at \$1.55, in

the Southwest at \$1.71 and in the Northwest at \$1.82. In considering these figures it must be remembered that they all may be materially altered by increasing or diminishing the percentages of births in the herds and flocks. Better methods, it is pointed out, will almost certainly increase the calf and lamb crops and in this way reduce the

In estimating these costs the investigators charged against the stock the market value. In the vicinity of all the feed consumed. In this way the necessity of considering the money invested in land and equipment was eliminated but, on the other hand, allowing the stock owner a profit on the feed increases

stock owner a profit on the feed increases somewhat the estimated cost of producing animals. As the owner might not realize his profit on the feed if he did not graze stock to utilize it, the actual profits in stock raising are probably somewhat greater than the difference between the market price of the animals and the report's estimates of the cost of

production.

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